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CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS, A DEMONSTRATION IN METHOD AND CONTENT. FINAL REPORT.

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FOUR KENTUCKY COMMUNITIES WITH COMMUNITY COLLEGES WERE CHOSEN, ON THE BASIS OF A "COMMUNITY READINESS PROFILE," FOR A PILOT DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IN CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS. A STEERING COMMITTEE AND LOCAL PROGRAM COMMITTEES WERE SET UP, TOGETHER WITH LOCAL PROGRAM COORDINATORS. BY MEANS OF A SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE, TEN IMPORTANT EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WERE UNCOVERED. ALTHOUGH NO PROFESSIONAL ADULT TEACHER WAS AVAILABLE, IN EACH COMMUNITY AN ABLE INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF WAS RECRUITED FROM LOCAL PEOPLE AND REGULAR VISITORS, SUCH AS, PROFESSIONAL TEACHERS, MINISTERS, AND BANKERS. REGISTRATIONS WERE 36 AT MAYSVILLE, 16 AT ELIZABETHTOWN, 60 AT SOMERSET, AND 52 AT CUMBERLAND. PROGRAMS DIFFERED IN FORM AND IN RESOURCE USE, BUT ALL MADE EXTENSIVE USE OF MATERIALS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY COUNCIL ON AGING. PROGRAM STRUCTURES AND CONTENT WERE EVALUATED IN STUDENT ESSAYS AND IN STAFF MEETINGS. HIGH STUDENT SATISFACTION AND MOTIVATION TOWARD FURTHER LEARNING WERE PREVALENT. STAFF EVALUATIONS WERE UNIVERSALLY FAVORABLE, AND EXTENSION OF THE PROGRAM TO OTHER COMMUNITIES UNDER FUNDS FROM TITLE 1, HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 WAS RECOMMENDED. (LY)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS:

A DEMONSTRATION IN METHOD AND CONTENT - FINAL REPORT

PROJECT NUMBER 66-009-008

FUNDED UNDER P.L. 89/329,

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965

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COUNCIL ON AGING

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

LEXINGTON

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CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR OLDER ADULTS: A DEMONSTRATION IN METHOD AND CONTENT

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Premise

"As we learn more, and as we translate our knowledge into intelligent action, we can confidently predict that the number of the educable aged will become larger and that education will play a more impressive and useful part in the lives of the elderly." Irving L. Webber, Research Scientist, Pinellas County Health Department, St. Petersburg.[1]

Introduction

Older persons are find that education has many values for them and they are increasingly seeking opportunities to learn. Donovan Scholars at the University of Kentucky, in the fall term of 1967, increased more than 32 per cent over the enrollment of last spring and 23 per cent over the fall semester of 1966. Through this program they are developing a group consciousness which is strongly fortified by the favorable impression they create for themselves in classes and on campus. The Donovan Fellowship is a new status symbol at this institution. Educa-

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1. Continuing Education in the Later Years, A Report. Vol. 12. Institute of Gerontology Series. Gainesville, Florida: Univ. of Florida Press, 1963, p.24.

tional programs sponsored by the New School for Social Research in New York and the American Association of Retired People are experiencing a similar contribution to "the culture of retirement."

Whereas, the effectiveness of the Donovan Program seems to be well established there remains a much larger challenge to education--the development of continuing education programs in communities where the tradition for returning to school is not an established pattern and where there are few adult educators and social gerontologists available to carry the educational ball. An effort to explore this challenge constitutes the substance of this report which has been made possible by a modest grant from the Kentucky Committee for Title I Projects, the Public Higher Education Act of 1965 (PL. 89/329).

Objectives

This is a pilot project designed to achieve three educational objectives:

1. To demonstrate that senior adults will take advantages of opportunities to add to their store of knowledge by the systematic study of problems of interest and concern to them.
2. To demonstrate that it is possible for them to contribute from their talents and wisdom to the solution of problems of community growth and development.
3. To demonstrate how communities can organize and conduct educational programs for senior adults.

Method

For many years the writer has been developing a schematic description of leaders of "people programs" such as community development, recreation, adult education, and the like. What has emerged has been called "The Sizeable Six," a teaching term which describes the functions of the "people leaders." The schema was used as the methodological outline for this project. It provides that the leader (s) must:

1. Develop the organizational structure and administrative support essential to the operation of the enterprise.
2. Ascertain what it is that the senior adults perceive their educational needs to be.
3. Develop the potential leaders indigenous to the community who can be recruited and trained to serve as teachers.
4. Mobilize the resources available to the community which can be deployed to meet the educational needs of the people.
5. Create programs to meet the educational needs of the people.
6. Evaluate the total processes to determine growth and development and to formulate guide lines for additional programs, if warranted.

Procedures

I. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

A. The Project Steering Committee

1. This project began with enlarging the executive committee of the Council on Aging by the addition of Donovan Scholars and University emeriti who had demonstrated an interest in continuing education.
2. The committee supervised the design of the project and advised the director in presenting it to the Title I Committee.
3. The committee also assisted in the development of the "Community Readiness Profile" and did most of the field work on it.

   --This is an interview schedule which attempts to select communities where there is a concern for senior adults, where the senior adults are interested in enhancing their opportunities to become involved in educational experiences, and where there is a base for operations, e.g. a community college or strong senior citizens club, for instance.

   --Communities which could not be personally visited were contacted by a mail survey using the same instrument.
4. The committee devised the "Personal Interest and Knowledge Interview Schedule," which was used for the purpose of:
   (a) learning about people and
   (b) introducing the program to the community.

5. The committee participated throughout the entire project by attending planning meetings, making field visitation and editing final reports.

B. Selecting the Communities

From the several communities from whom the Project Steering Committee received community readiness profiles four were selected for the pilot demonstration because:

1. Each, except one, had a community college whose advisory boards officially endorsed the project; the fourth had been promised a community college for the fall of 1966 but plans for its activation had been postponed by the University. The very capable Community College Advisory Board was anxious to maintain public support by offering this project which had wide public acceptance.
2. The local director of the community college and the chairman of the advisory board in the fourth community were convincing in their enthusiastic acceptance of the program and their willingness to cooperate in its development.
3. The local news media demonstrated a willingness and ability to give the project wide public exposure.
4. There were community leaders who expressed a willingness to accept a commitment to the project.

5. There were several talented people who were highly respected in the community from whom one could be chosen to function as local project coordinator.

6. There were facilities available which presented a minimum of architectural barriers to senior adults.

C. The Local Planning Committee

1. The director of the three community colleges and the Chairman of the Advisory Board of the fourth met in their respective communities with the Council on Aging to plan public meetings to which local leaders were invited for the purpose of:

a. Securing their support for the project as participants in the classes to be developed, and to explain the project to people in the community.

b. Developing formally organized structures to assist the community college in conducting the program.

c. Electing a chairman and secretary who, with the community college director, would constitute the executive committee empowered to act for the whole committee.

d. Presenting the project to representatives of the news media.

e. Planning a community survey of information and attitudes about aging.

2. Each executive committee selected its own program coordinator and two additional representatives to the project steering committee.

D. The local program coordinator

1. This local coordinator became a member of the staff of the project director. He was paid a small stipend and allowed a travel budget for his needs and for those who would conduct the community survey.

2. His job description included:

a. Keeping the community college fully informed about all aspects of the project.

b. Participating in the preparation of the course syllabus.

c. Organizing a course of instruction which would meet for a minimum of 16 clock hours.

d. Recruiting students for the course.

e. Registering students according to instructions provided.

f. Arranging for instructors to teach the subjects he did not handle himself.

g. Supervising the community survey and reporting the findings to the central steering committee.

h. Securing an evaluation of the course from each person who completed it.

i. Issuing "Certificates of Completion" to all who were eligible.

j. Preparing a summary report for the community college director, the local news media, and the central steering committee, with recommendations as to follow-up programs if any were indicated.

II. ASCERTAINING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF OLDER PERSONS

This project began with the assumption that older persons had pretty well formulated ideas about the problems of aging for which they needed information. It was the responsibility of the planners to first learn what these needs were and then plan programs which would supply answers in readily understandable terms. The central steering committee designed an interview schedule intended to secure this information and funds were allocated to the coordinators for its use. The project director provided some training in interviewing techniques in his conferences with local planning committees and coordinators.

The instrument included these sample items:

1. Do you know what to do if you want to make a plan for retirement? (Yes - No) There were six questions in this section.
2. How do you feel about the opportunities provided for you as an older person to become involved in programs and projects of your church? (Completely Satisfied, Partially Satisfied, Dissatisfied, Indifferent) There were 14 items in this section.

3. How do people you know feel about growing older? (A five-point scale from "don't like" to "enjoy sense of power.")
4. A personal information section pertaining to sex, life-time occupation, place of residence, degree of activity in community enterprises, age by 5-year intervals, education, and estimate of present health.

One community re-wrote the schedule eliminating all other items but the first, Knowledge. A common complaint was, "It's none of your business," which reflects a rather general resistance apparently met by investigators in other studies. There was some objection because the schedule was too long, the questions too vague, they required too much thinking. There was some condemnation of the questions about church attitudes--this was hallowed ground not to be tampered with by local inquirers. Plans for a follow-up survey were shelved after the director of one of the community colleges wrote as follows:

"Even though I would be willing to have the questionnaires filled out again by as many people as we could possibly contact, I feel that perhaps it would not be wise to do so. I make this statement for the following reasons:

1. The workers that carried the questionnaires to the older people in the community were somewhat discouraged by the reception they received when they contacted these people.

2. The questionnaire had certain items that referred to self-analysis, and it appears to me that the older people do not like to think along these lines. . .It is my feeling that the attitude and interest of the older adults in this community toward the college and toward the classes that we are having for them is healthy, is pleasant, and is conducive to their continuing in such a program. I am afraid that if we go back to them with questionnaires it might somewhat discourage and have a negative effect on what we are now doing."

The survey was useful, in spite of its shortcomings. Through it as an entity, and through the processes of personal interaction thus engendered, it was learned that older people are keenly aware of their need for knowledge about:

1. Myself and others as people who are growing old and what it is like to be an aged person.
2. Income Maintenance
3. Estate Planning
4. Housing
5. Resources program development from state and federal sources
6. Community Planning
7. Medicare
8. The Churches and Older People

9. Satisfying Uses of Leisure Time

10. Health Education

The survey did perform the useful function of alerting the communities to the fact that an educational program for and about older people was being prepared. The news media were provided with tangible material for news and feature stories. Friends meeting at supermarkets, clubs, and on street corners talked about the program. It was mentioned on Sundays from pulpits. The interviewers themselves were sought out by people whose curiosity had been aroused. From such exchanges as these in the communications network of the community, people began to express their personal comments about needs which were received ultimately by the local planning committee and woven into the fabric of understanding of what the course should be like in terms of its content.

III. DEVELOPING POTENTIAL LEADERS INDIGENOUS TO THE COMMUNITIES

The local planning committees, assisted by their own chairmen and the directors of the community colleges, selected the teachers who presided over the several sessions of the course. In this task they were guided by the syllabus which they helped to create.

The process of developing the syllabus was used as the principal procedure for training the staff which would lead the program in their respective communities. The syllabus committee was composed of members of the community colleges, the local project coordinators

and one or more representatives of the local planning committees. Altogether, 38 people participated in this process, of which 15 came from the four communities, 12 were from the Council on Aging, and 9 were consultants with broad experience. They met for three days at Carnahan House, the University's continuing education center, with expenses provided from project funds.

A group of well-qualified educators and practitioners in social gerontology was recruited to serve as consultants for the syllabus workshop. They were: W. Dean Mason, Executive Administrator of Kennedy Memorial Christian Home, Martinsville, Indiana; Esther Stamats, American Association of Retired Persons, Washington, D. C.; Sebastian Tine of Senior Citizens, Inc., Nashville; Francis Binder, Executive Director of the Kentucky Commission on Aging, Frankfort, Kentucky; Dr. Kenneth Harper, Training Director, VISTA Training Division, Washington, D.C.; Hugh McNary and James Alley of the Lexington Social Security Office; John Price, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Region III, Charlottesville, Virginia; and Dr. Jean Thune, Psychologist, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

Other participants were James McDonald and Robert Mitchell, Kentucky Research Foundation; David Countin, Research Assistant to Council on Aging; and Trudy Thompson, Program Director, Council on Aging.

The workshop was mandated to prepare a syllabus to be used as a teaching guide, as source of information on method and content, and an aid in locating resource persons and materials.

The contribution of the workshop as a staff training process may be summarized as follows:

1. Emphasis was placed upon involving people in the learning process, especially in listening to and interpreting what others are saying.
2. Everyone participated in meetings, and in lengthy informal conversations afterwards.
3. The table of contents for the syllabus was hammered out through group discussion and committee meetings. Specific sections were then completed by small groups working under the guidance of the consultants.
4. Packets of material related to each section were prepared and distributed; other information was picked up on a random, personal basis.

Subsequent preparation of the local leaders was accomplished under the supervision of the community college directors, assisted by the project director. The availability of the WATS network made it possible for training conferences to be conducted by telephone.

All teaching in each community was done by local people or by others who are regular visitors to it in the pursuit of their work. They came

from these occupations: 1. Professional teachers; 2. Social Security Officers; 3. State Department of Health; 4. Lawyer; 5. Banker; 6. County Agent; 7. Ministers.

It should be noted that no professional teacher especially prepared for working with older adults was available in any community. And yet, each local community coordinator reported that he had no difficulty in recruiting a competent staff and that he had no failures among those whom he used. One coordinator reported that near the end of the course people began to volunteer their services should the program be repeated.

IV. MOBILIZING RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE COMMUNITY

A basic tenent of the "Sizeable Six" approach holds that there are many other people who have interests similar to the project leaders. In this instance it was soon discovered that many agencies are vitally concerned about aging and were willing, even anxious, to make their services available. Their motives may differ from legislative mandates to institutional opportunism, but there they are: agencies, associations, businesses, professions, institutions, and the like. All have an interest in people -- most have staff and various kinds of material aids which can be used in community programs.

RESOURCE	SUBJECT
Former School Teacher	Who Are We
Minister	Homes Where Older People Live
Nutritionist	Why We Must Eat Right
Registered Nurse	How to Keep Well
Psychologist	Mental Health, Guard it Good
Attorney	Wills, Deeds, Trusts
Social Security Officer	It's Your Money
Department of Economic Security	Medicare and Medicade
Department of Health	Nursing Homes Meet High Standards
Home Demonstration Agent	Managing the Family Budget
Artist	Making the Home Pretty

It is apparent that there is a wealth of assistance available to the communities just for the asking. This is supported by one project coordinator who said, "Although I always realized that this was true I never knew the vast wealth of resources available and the wonderful quality of talent and wisdom, and the readiness with which people would volunteer to help."

V. PROGRAMMING TO ACHIEVE PROJECT GOALS

Given the components of a program -- space, leaders and materials, the equation for meaningful service is not complete until content is identified. This must then be woven into a pattern that

makes sense to every one concerned: sponsors, participants, and observers. Programming to achieve personal and societal objectives is an inescapable responsibility of sponsors, leaders and participants.

The identification of personal needs of older persons implies more than a listing of statements people make about something they don't have but want, about changing what they have for something else. A need may be defined as the recognized disparity between what is and what might be. This recognition might be in the stream of consciousness of an individual, but he might not be aware of it at all, or, perhaps, ever so slightly aware of it. Or, the faulty perception may be on the part of the group or community. To illustrate, an individual may perceive his need as being knowledge about income maintenance; the project staff may see his need as becoming involved with a peer group. That both objectives are complementary is apparent in retrospect but the necessary intra-structuring may be overlooked by an overemphasis on content per se, or method per se.

From the very beginning this project was conceived to be a procedure for involving older people in intellectual, social, and physical activities which were meaningful to them so that they could accept aging as a natural process on life's continuum.

The syllabus workshop began its work on the keynote of involvement. All of the basic wishes for love, recognition, security and new experiences were presented by Dr. Harper in his lessons on group dynamics.

His often repeated question, "What do I really hear you say?" became the by-word of the workshop. Every session of the workshop and most of the subsequent classes in the communities involved people as partners in the communicating process. Conversation was encouraged, both in the form of questions and as dialogue. Being in the presence of leaders--teachers who were fellow townsmen and neighbors eliminated the barriers to freely mingling intellectually and socially so often erected when an "outside expert" or self-styled authority are brought in.

Built into the program as a second objective was a strong effort to develop group consciousness among older persons themselves. An effort was made to get them to accept the fact that they are a special group within the social system and that they have a responsibility for giving of their talents and wisdom to the welfare of the community. This was achieved by the procedures employed to affect socialization: name tags, addressing people by name, coffee chats, etc. People generally knew each other by the time the class ended, often on a first-name basis. Members of the classes became self-conscious of their unique roles and status: the news media contributed to this, as did the college students who proudly spoke of parents and grandparents as "college students." The Certificates of Accomplishment awarded at ceremonies during the final session provided evidence of special accomplishment and attendant status.

That there was considerable development in personal and community knowledge about aging is an incontestable outcome of the project. Subjects from the syllabus were introduced into the program when the students asked for them. Printed material pertaining to each subject was available and widely distributed. The instructors succeeded in evincing considerable interaction; after-class conversations were often animated and prolonged. Finally, some of the participants found themselves once more actively engaged in community affairs; for others this was less pronounced but all were involved at least some because of their membership in the course.

The specific content of the course, although fairly well delineated by the syllabus workshop, was flexible and each coordinator felt free to proceed as the group wished. Subjects, which have already been listed above, proved to be quite adequate to meet the interests of each group. As one coordinator inferred, it is not so much the content that is important but the success with which people felt a sense of belonging to the class and in learning useful information. This is a re-affirmation of the "group consciousness" objective described earlier.

VI. EVALUATION AND PROJECTION

A. Summary

Of the ten communities in Kentucky where there are community colleges, four were chosen because the steering committee felt they were ready for a cooperative educational venture focused upon older

adults. There was no intention to equate the communities on any sociological scale nor was there an effort to secure those with particular uniqueness.

The locations were:

> Maysville, Population 8484, an agricultural industrial community on the Ohio River,
>
> Elizabethtown, population 9641, a rural town rapidly becoming industrial and influences by Louisville and Fort Knox,
>
> Somerset, population 7117, a stable rural trading area and recreation center near Lake Cumberland, and
>
> Cumberland, population 4271, a typical mining community deep in Appalachian Kentucky.

All but Maysville has a community college and one is planned for it. Some disappointment over its delay was found in the community and since this was the first program undertaken in the name of the college there was much apprehension about it. However, such fears proved to be unfounded -- the program was quite successful, according to reports by the chairman of the planning committee, the coordinator, and the press.

Each community developed its program differently. Somerset developed their program as a regular course of the community college and named it Sociology 092, The Community and You. This made it possible to earn one hour of credit, if desired. A total of 60 enrolled of whom 42 registered for credit and the rest as auditors. Some others

attended a few class meetings but these visitors do not appear on the class roll. In explaining the reason for credit, the college director stated that many people always wanted to be officially identified with the University of Kentucky and this was their first real chance to do so. There are no measures of difference in attendance or performance between the credit students and auditors -- apparently none existed, according to the project coordinator.

Registration for the program in the communities was as follows: Maysville 36, Elizabethtown 16, Somerset 60, and Cumberland 52.

The course covered 16 clock hours in all of the colleges except Elizabethtown where the total was 12. At Somerset the last meeting was devoted to a banquet. Each college except Elizabethtown awarded certificates to those who completed the course.

Each community differed in terms of the uses of resources. At Maysville a masterful teacher taught each class except the one on social security and income maintenance. Elizabethtown used 4 leaders, Somerset 12, and Cumberland 3. All made extensive use of the packets of materials assembled by the Council on Aging staff. Many public and private agencies generously added to this collection of materials.

B. Evaluation

The structure and content of this pilot demonstration program were evaluated from two points of view: by the students and by the staff. The students were asked to write essays about the

program in terms of its meaning to them. The staff met in a two day session to review all phases of the program with reference to improving it for their own communities and for others who might want to do something similar for older adults. These two procedures are summarized in synoptic form:

1. What the students said -

A total of 30 essays from Somerset and 28 from Maysville are on file in the Council's office. Written in the shaking handwriting of a man who labored by the day or on the typewriter of a professional woman, these essays tell the story of what it means to go to college when you are a senior adult.

"I have attended each class...and have thoroughly enjoyed all."

"This special session...has been very beneficial to me."

"I went into it with doubts and feeling that I would not be interested. However, one cannot be in a class taught by Mr. Wilcox and remain uninterested very long."

"I shall look forward toward another such session in due time."

"The adult education class has afforded an opportunity for meeting some very lovely people - putting faces and personalities to what had only been names in the newspapers."

"A high point made by Mrs. Prather...was the relationship and behavior of one's self to others..."

"In the future I would like to see more courses offered that would be interesting to senior citizens as I think it is important that we keep busy with our heads and our hands."

"The lessons on medicare, medicade, and hospitalization were wonderful for the simple reason so many things were brought out..."

"To me these courses have been like a good drink of cold water when you are so thirsty to know so much."

And so on and on, in many ways the theme is repeated: We are happy and grateful, we learned so much, we want to keep on learning. These impressions may be summarized by relating them to the first objective of the project: To provide opportunities for older people to add to their store of knowledge by the systematic study of problems of interest to them.

2. The staff which met at Carnahan House to evaluate the project included the Central Steering Committee, project coordinators, local planning committee chairmen and representatives, community college directors, the director of the Council on Aging and his associates, and the Dean of University Extension. The transcription of their remarks covers 121 pages and represents both the doubts and the convictions of those responsible for the project and its extension in time and space. The differences in communities is revealed in the explanations of the people describing how they went about the tasks of introducing the

project to their publics, recruiting staffs, developing structures, and involving people.

The Terminal Evaluation Agenda prepared by the Council staff proved inadequate in that people from the field wanted to talk about their experiences not the problems of organization at the remote level of the University. Nor were they much interested in talking about their own problem of organization. Later, both of these were discussed, but, at first, everyone wanted to tell about "the little 80-year-old lady who..." or "the man rough in the ways of a laborer and with only a little formal schooling who..." But these refer back to the first objective of providing educational opportunities for older adults, a subject just presented.

The comments of the staff are categorized in selected synoptic form according to the two remaining objectives:

(2) Contributing talents and wisdom to the solution of community problems, and (3) the extension of this or similar programs to other communities.

Objective two, contributing to solution of community problems:

Reverend L. D. Fisher, Somerset Coordinator, read from an essay prepared by a student in the program, "I learned much about my community and my neighbors by getting better acquainted with them and their problems of life." "...if you wanted to see democracy in action ;you should have seen it (in class)."

"Some of them are concerned with politics, history, geography."

"They want housing for the elderly...The majority of them expressed tremendous interest in seeing that this be one of the outcomes of this course."

"A president of a local senior citizens club said that he hoped to see a senior citizens home in his community and only then would he be willing to sit down."

"On one occasion we wanted to talk to Washington and Richard E. Cooper called his brother up there (Senator John Sherman Cooper) and his brother called Senator Mondale about coming down here for Commenc ement."

"One of the leading lawyers met me in the court house and he could hardly express how much he appreciated what we were doing."

"One of the things about this course was getting people closer to the college."

"We have been trying for over a year to get a grant for a community center." "Maybe this group could help us."

"....we need a library badly...I am wondering if there isn't some way to consolidate."

At the time of the final evaluation the programs in the communities were fairly new, no class had been organized longer than four months. Impact upon community problems will undoubtedly rest upon the passing of time when lessons learned in classes are applied to local situations. One

community, Somerset, is already working toward the consolidation of financial resources for individual projects, e.g. a new library, health center, comprehensive mental health center, recreation building, into a multi-purpose facility serving all interests with programs for all age groups.

Objective three, demonstrating how communities can organize and conduct educational programs for older persons. Everything about this project has been a demonstration. What is needed now is a review of experiences to date and a projection of future plans. While this process is being developed one community, Somerset, has gone ahead on its own with a repeat course. Using an award of $500.00 from the Kentucky Welfare Foundation, given in recognition of their outstanding success with the first program, this second course enrolled 76 people of whom 50 were Donovan Scholars, i.e. they were above the age of 65. Plans are underway for a third course in the spring of 1968 and a search is being made for the necessary funds.

The staff evaluation was universally favorable to the program and recommended its extension to other communities. To this end a resolution was unanimously approved favoring the continued funding of Title I of PL 89/329, the Public Higher Education Act of 1965.

A number of issues were raised in the staff evaluation. Following are some of general concern to all people considering programs of this kind:

1. Should credit be offered? Yes, on an optional basis. The rules of a regular, transferable credit course with or without prerequisites probably will not serve the needs of older people whose educational background is rooted in a different era of academic interpretations. However, courses should meet existing criteria for length of sessions, number of class meetings, and the like so that everyone associated with administration of higher education has a common denominator for understanding the program.

2. Unless a master teacher is available, as at Maysville, it is better to use the leadership resources available to the community. This imposes the necessity for orientation to community organization practices upon the coordinator.

3. Examinations as such perhaps have no place in continuing education for older adults but essays or letters to the coordinator are highly valuable and freely prepared by most students.

4. As valuable as project directors and financing agencies consider research to be, great care must be exercised in the design and use of interview schedules and other probing instruments. Older people guard their privacy with great care.

5. Apparently meeting times and places do not exercise the stringent controls suspected by project planners; in this project classes were held in morning and afternoons in some communities and at night in others. Some met in community colleges, some in downtown buildings, some had barriers of stairs or parking.

ERIC Clearinghouse
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on Adult Education